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ABSTRACT

Much of the research conducted within the black community served primarily to promote the interests and personal gain of the researchers rather than the community. Consequently, the research proved more harmful than helpful, thereby providing no visible or appreciable payoff or benefits to the black community. Moreover, the perspectives of the white researchers were misguided and misfocused. Instead of defining a psychology of the black community and how it has managed to survive in this oppressive society, they focused almost exclusively on the pathology of the ghetto and made intensive and extensive analysis of the victims of the system. Bold strategies must be developed for bringing about an immediate and full cessation to the rape, exploitation, and plunder in the black community by insensitive mercenaries who called themselves researchers. Black professionals and black people must maintain a constant vigil in order to prevent the continuation of the sacking and pillaging so rampant in the black community. An example of such a strategy is a community control group established in Boston in 1970 by the Boston Black United Front. [This document is reproduced from the best available copy.] (Author/JM)

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Note: Courtesy draft of a paper to be revised for inclusion in a forthcoming book entitled "Contemporary Issues in Black Psychology by Robert L. Williams. I would appreciate your forwarding any comments to me. R.L.W.

Negroes,
Sweet and Docile
Meek, humble, and kind:
Beware the day
they change their minds.

Ronald Mayes Beaten, Langston Hughes, 1942

Long Title: Research in the Black Community:
A Black Psychologist's Perspective*

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Short Title: Get Out. Now!

During the past four decades the black community has become a researcher's paradise, a veritable hunting ground for white experts. Professor Charles Thomas, Past President of the Association of Black Psychologists, puts the situation as follows:

> "White psychologists have raped black communities all over the country. Yes, raped. They have used black people as the human equivalent of rats to be run through Ph.D. experiments and as helpless clients for programs that serve middle-class white administrators better than they do the poor. They have used research on black people as green stamps and trade for research grants. They have been vultures...."

In fact, much of the research conducted within the black community served primarily to promote the interests and personal gain of the researchers rather than the community. Consequently, the research proved more harmful than helpful thereby providing no visible or appreciable

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payoff or benefits to the Black community. The white experts learned quickly that black is not only beautiful, it is also marketable, profitable.

Moreover, the perspectives of the white researchers were misguided and misfocused. Instead of defining a psychology of the black community and how it has managed to survive in this oppressive society, they focused almost exclusively on the pathology of the ghetto and made intensive and extensive analysis of the victims of the system. As the poet so eloquently put the situation:

> All looks jaundiced to the jaundiced eye,
> as all looks infected to the infected spy."

To be sure, the white researchers were greedily tuned in specifically to look for and find pathology in the ghetto. As Bouguslaw (1971) points out:

> "The truism is, Perception is functionally selective! The experimental evidence for this truism is enormous...Suffice it to say that the hungry man examining a menu "sees" the food items; the thirsty man "sees" the drink items; some men see only the pretty girl on the cover. What does the sociologist see?

It is clear that white sociologists e.g. Rainwater, Moynihan, and Psychologists Jensen, etc. all saw pathology, weaknesses, and deficits in the black community. Black behavioral scientists on the contrary, see strengths in the same community (Staples, Hare, Carmichael, Cleaver). The white researcher found a "deviant community" by either selectively overlooking or ignoring the strengths of the community. On the one hand the clinical model is designed to sharpen the clinician's ability to detect pathology, weaknesses and deficits in the patients and victims. On the other hand, the model seriously limits the range of vision and perspective by narrowing interests to "what is wrong with these black people" rather than what is wrong with this system and how it contributed to the creation

the problems. Everyone remembers the horror house, Pruitt-Igoe housing project (called a deviant community by Rainwater and Pittman) in St. Louis. First of all, it is not an accident, that the elevators and stairwells in Pruitt-Igoe housing projects were used as toilets by children and adults. It was intentionally or unintentionally planned from the beginning. Regardless, the results are the same. No toliet facilities were located conveniently near the play areas or on the ground level. Secondly, it is unreasonable, if not absurd, to expect a five or six-year old who is in a push to go to the bathroom to take an elevator that a) might not be working, and b) stops only on the 4th, 7th, and 10th floors! Considering all alternatives, the child would certainly employ the law of parsimony by either having an "accident" in his pants or on the elevator. His behavior is not "deviant" but predictable from a host of situational variables. But, what is deviant are the architects of the system; the ones who planned such a macabre situation. What we are saying is that the day has drawn to a close where the white researcher can freely and wantonly enter the black community masquerading under the bright-colored banner of research.

This paper will therefore speak primarily to developing bold strategies for bringing about an immediate and full cessation to the rape, exploitation and plunder in the black community by insensitive mercenaries who called themselves researchers. Let us learn a lesson from one of our African brothers, the late Tom Myboya who pointed out the plight of the Africans. When the white man went to Africa, the Africans owned the land and the white man had the bible. Now, the white man owns the land and the Africans have the bible. Thus, black professionals and black people must maintain a constant vigil in order to prevent the continuation of the sacking and pillaging so rampant in the black community.

The black community must be constantly aware of the behavioral scientist in general and the academician in particular. Due to the publish or perish doctrine, the jobs of many academicians are at stake. The young professor must produce scholarly research or his faculty appointment will be terminated. Thus, most of the social science research in the black communities is not sensitive or responsive to the needs of the people. The research typically is not oriented toward bringing about social change, but toward elevating the professional status of the researchers and bringing more research grants.

From an extensive review of the literature, it is clear that research conducted over the years in black communities has led not to positive definitions regarding black families, life styles, manhood and womanhood, but to many negative formulations. Many of the studies conducted in the interest of the establishment have had political overtones and ramifications. A few of the myths created by the white researcher are as follows:

1. The self-hatred thesis
2. Negroes have a genetic intellectual inferiority
3. Black male emasculation by black women thesis
4. The black female matriarchy
5. Deterioration of the black American family
6. Alarming illegitimacy rates
7. Feminine traits produced in boys from father-absent homes
8. Impulsivity of black children caused by father absence.
9. And others

A statement prepared by the Boston Black United Front charges that research conducted in the black community by whites shows the following characteristics:

1. It has been used as an arm of the establishment to perpetuate its goals.

2. It has been used to stereotype and otherwise mis-label black people.

3. It has provided more money for the researchers than for the researchees.

The basic question facing the black professional is what power is available in the black community? What decisions can it make? How to make them? What are the priorities? Williams (1970) pointed out the following situation:

> "At this time the task of the black professional, it seems to me, is that of 1) organizing the black community, 2) developing a kind of global unification in order to mobilize the strengths and resources of the black community, and 3) making certain that the group is cohesive. Further, I see another important task of the black professional, as one of preventing the white researcher from further exploitation of the black community...I propose a national moratorium on research in black communities by white researchers.

The black community already has the power for self-direction and self-determination. All it needs to do is begin taking care of business (TCB). My use of the term power then is not in the sense of power over another person or group. It is in the sense of having power over one's life for self-direction and determination. Carmichael and Hamilton define black power as "a call for black people in this country to unite, to recognize their heritage and to build a sense of community. It is a call for black people to define their own goals, to build their own organizations and to support those organizations. It is a call to reject racist institutions and values of this society."

Black power then is the capacity of black people to overcome significant parts or all parts of oppression and to introduce changes in the face of opposition. One strategy for showing power in the black community is the establishment of veto or special interest and monitoring groups. A veto

group would exist to stop projects and programs which are antagonistic to the cause of black people as well as to provide a proper perspective and direction. As such veto groups exist as defense groups rather than as leadership groups but they do exert power. (Reisesmen)

CASE HISTORY OF A BLACK VETO GROUP

During 1970 in Boston, a committee comprised of black agencies, organizations, professional groups, and individuals from the black community was established by the Boston Black United Front. It is a community control group in action. The group was referred to as the Community Research Review Committee (CRRC). Its main functions were to review research proposed for or being conducted in the black community, to determine whether such research or its implications would be in the best interests of the black community and to assure that the research had a black perspective. The CRRC required that all research grant proposals intending to use black subjects and/or facilities in the black community be reviewed and approved by CRRC before any such research is initiated. The research was also subject to continous reviews by CRRC. In addition, CRRC required that the research projects involve significant black personnel including a black co-investigator, all of whom must be approved by CRRC. Aside from the research roles of the black staff, an important role would be to protect the interests of the black community as follows:

A. Basically, the black staff must be involved in all levels including 1) the design and development of the study, 2) implementation of the study, 3) monitoring of the study, 4) analysis and interpretation of the results, and 5) preparation and publication of reports, papers, talks, etc. based on the research data.

B. Copies of all data, analysis and relevant materials must be available for deposit with the veto group as they become available.

C. Copies of all project reports including interim, as well as final reports, must be filed with the veto committee prior to oral or written presentation as such reports become available.

D. After analyzing the data, summarizing the results and preparing the preliminary final reports but before dissminating any such information to the funding source, the professional or lay public the principal investigator must 1) circulate a copy of the proposed report to the veto group for review, comment and criticism, and, if necessary, rebuttal. If the principal investigator has the report independently reviewed of his own initiative, such reviews must be included in the report when it is sent to the CRRC, 2) agree to include, as apart of the final and as part of any subsequent publication of the findings, a critical presentation of any alternative--interpretations of major findings which cannot be reconciled with the principal investigators main findings.

Using the foregoing guidelines, in the Spring of 1970 CRRC evaluated a research proposal which was designed to study the effects of intervention on mental haalth in young black children. Briefly, the project was to be conducted over a four-year period on an all-black group of infants from 3 and 1/2 to 13 1/2 months of age. The babies and their mothers were to be subjected to regular intervention over a ten-month period. Black students in psychology and black psychologists of Boston become concerned about the implications of this project and invited the principal investigators to a meeting for further discussion of this proposal.

In a letter to the PI, "In general, the groups feel that you and your collaborators have given scant attention to the possible harmful consequences of your research and are the victims of that particular myopia which infects scientists on scoring academic points." Also, the PI was sent a copy of the United Front's requirements for research to be conducted in the black community. About a month later the PI responded and indicated that he was willing to accept many of the criteria of that CRRC.

> We have assumed in responding to the United Fronts proposed guidelines that the staff of the Child Development project is entering into a collaborative working relationship working with relationship with you and the organization you represent, a relationship that in the long run should be a benefit to both groups and to the community as a whole.

The CRRC spent several months reviewing the proposal and concluded at the end of its review the following:

> "CRRC has carefully studied the plans for design and implementation, as well as the potential effects of the Roxbury Infant program current study in the community. This project has been extensively reviewed and evaluated; over a five-month period, several meetings were held with the black members of the staff and the principal investigators. In addition, competent qualified black consultant's advice was obtained external to the committee and external to the Boston area."

As a result of this detailed review, the Community Research Review Committee concludes that this project is <u>not</u> in the best interest of the black community and indeed a threat to the future well-being of black people. The committee, therefore, urgently request all black mothers to refuse to allow their babies to be used in this study and encourages them to convince their friends to also avoid the project.

Because of the heat that was put on by the community, the PI decided to terminate the project in the best interests of the community and the research as a whole.

Clearly, the efforts of the CRRC are to be applauded. Black communities around the country would do well to look into and consider seriously the applicability of this veto group model to their areas. The Black Student Psychological Association, The Association of Black Psychologists, and other black professional organizations in the social and behavioral sciences should consider the feasibility of expanding this model on a national basis to include monitoring and reviewing all research at federal,

state, and local levels to be conducted in the black community.

In addition to the veto group, Black people must be represented on all research review panels and study sections which deal with funding research which affect the lives of black citizens. A great deal of research approved by NIMH, OE, NSF, and other federal agencies did not have any black input at the implementation or review stage. Obviously, the CRRC model then is a response to the failure of federal and state agencies to have blacks on review committees. Thus, black people have decided to set up black review committees in exile. If Blacks were more represented on committees, there might not have been a need for such veto groups as CRRC.

Black students on predominantly-white university campuses need also to be alert to the kind of research panels in existence and must address themselves to monitoring research which young white professors are into. Frequently, the young black student is used as a tool for making entry into the black community because the white professor is afraid to enter or to negotiate with the black community. He, therefore, uses the black students as his research assistant to become an agent used to exploit his own people.

Black students at some universities have taken a strong stand against further abusive and dehumanizing research being conducted on Blacks.

At Washington University (St. Louis) on December 13, 1968, the Chancellor informed the Association of Black Collegians that he would communicate to the faculty and to research review committee members the concerns expressed by the Association with respect to social and behavioral research involving Black subjects...The Association's concerns were for sensitivity to the dangers of psychological harrassment of research subjects, for full protection of rights of privacy, for the desirability of using Black personnel in some of the research, and for responsible communication of research findings to representatives of the community upon

or about which the research was performed...The Chancellor requested the Vice Chancellor for Research to appoint at least one Black faculty member to the three-man review panel for any research project involving the study of groups or sub-groups of Black people, and recommended that principal investigators attend, and direct staff under their direction to attend, such "sensitivity seminars" on racial understanding that may be held on campus.

Black students would do well to obtain a commitment from the university that black students, faculty, and administrators will be fully represented on all University review panels to monitor all research involving black people. It is imperative that Blacks have the power to block or reverse decisions which have racist's implications.

Black power then is not racism in reverse or an analogue of black supremacy to white supremacy. The goal of the veto group and black power is full participation in the decision-making processes which affect the lives of black people.

ETHNICITY OF THE RESEARCH AND STAFF

Ideally, the researcher must be black and competent. One way of restricting pillagers and plundering in the black community is to require that the principle investigator, or the researcher be black and require that his research have an approved black perspective. The terms Black and Black perspective pertain here not to color of the skin but to 1) a state of mind of the researcher, 2) his past track record, and 3) whether the research will provide direct and indirect benefits to the black community. A black person is one who does not exploit the black community. A black person knows black culture and can formulate problems which are consistent with the needs of the black community. He has a social-change philosophy rather than a problem-solving philosophy. Curiosity seekers with white

or negro perspectives in the black community are unwanted. Research questions should not be addressed to what is wrong but what are some of the solutions of bringing about ways of implementing these solutions. Focus must not be exlusively on the victims but the attention must address itself to the victimizers or must deal with helping the victims deal with the system and victimizers. Personal interest research or research to preserve the researchers interest should be excluded. Those who do research in the black community must be able to distinguish clearly between what is a <u>real</u> problem and what is merely system-induced problems.

<u>SYSTEM-INDUCED ILLNESSES</u>

In medicine, a phenomenon called iatrogenic illnesses (induced by the physician) is well known. Instead of treating the primary illness, the iatrogenic ones receive the attention. A classic example of this phenomenon occurs in the institutionalizing process of the mental patient. Once he has become institutionalized, he now needs de-institutionalizing, a process which takes a longer time to treat than does the illness for which he was admitted to the hospitals. Institutionalization then is an iatrogenic illness.

The same analogy holds for the black community. The majority of problems researched by white experts are iatrogenic or system induced problems, whether they exist in any of the following systems: health, housing, employment, economic, education, legal, religious, political, penal, social, and news media. For example, the "bussing problem" is unequivocally system-induced. It is not a <u>real</u> problem. It is a herring (Black, red, or white). The system created separate and inferior schools through <u>de facto</u> residental segregation. Bus the parents, not the children. The real problem is not being dealt with. Beware of the system that <u>produces</u> the problems and then seeks to look to the victims for solutions.

ETHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS: The majority of the professional organizations have ethical codes; some are enforced, others are not. But, the Black community cannot expect changes to occur through moral suasion or by the enforcement of ethical codes of conduct by professional organizations. For example, the American Psychological Association put together an elaborate Case Book on ethical standards of psychologist in 1967. It contains 19 general ethical principles. Principle 16, for example, addresses itself specifically to research precautions as follows:

> "The psychologist assumes obligations of the welfare of his research subjects, both animal and human...When a reasonable possibility of injurous after effects exist, research is conducted only when the subjects or their responsible agents are fully informed of this possibility and agree to participate nevertheless".
> This principle is too weak and inappropriate for the black perspective.

Black psychologists cannot and will not accept white research plunderers entering the community knowing that the research will have even a remote possibility of injurous after-effects. It is precisely this lack of concern by white experts that the black community is alarmed about. In the past years there have not been enough precautions taken to insure protection of the subjects generally and black people in particular.

The APA is more concerned with providing protection for psychological tests than it is for people. While only one principle pertains to research involving human subjects, three ethical principles were written to govern test security:

> Principle 13 states that psychological tests are to be protected by not being reproduced or popularized in ways which might invalidate the tecnhiques. The user is required to assure adequate storage, etc. of the tests.
>
> Principle 14 states that test scores like test materials are released only to persons who are qualified to interpret and use them properly.

> Principle 15 states that psychological tests are offered for commerical publication and should be provided only to publishers who present their test in a professional way and distribute them only to qualified users.

Even more seriously, Author Robert Jensen, the man who plundered extensively in black communities has been a member of APA since 1953. Jensen's research has been most hostile and denigrating to black people. Yet APA has remained silent. It has not censured Jensen or expelled him from its organization. If there were ever a serious violation of ethical codes of conduct, Jensen is a leading figure.

Furthermore, in 1968 the Association of Black Psychologists petitioned APA to call a moratorium on testing because of the cultural bias in most ability tests. APA refused to respond claiming that such bias has not been demonstrated. Since 1968 a number of black psychologists clearly pointed out that the racism inherent in certain ability tests. The APA remains silent.

POLITICAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATION

The black community has been keenly aware of the research findings by white scholars are increasingly being used to justify political and legal matters and therefore to influence the public policy against the welfare of black people.

> Wind
> in the cotton fields
> Gentle breeze
> Beware the hour
> it uproots the trees!
>
> Roland Hayes Beaten,
> L. Hughes, 1942

Taken from a lecture given at the Chase Park Plaza Hotel
Questions and Answers given on Research Requirements in the Black Community

Black and white comparative research should be elimina ted because it has racist perspective. Someone is going to lose either the black or the white. What I'm saying here is that for black folks the comparative researchers have shown the following. If it is a negative trait black people tend to have more than whites. The comparative research tends to come out of a racist ideology. It speaks to the deficit versus the different model but basically comparative researchs embraces a deficit model. That is to find out whats wrong with blacks or what are the weaknesses; what needs to be done to bring them up and to make them white. This research should be outlawed because there really is no payoff for the black man. There is more payoff for the white researcher. The difference model speaks to the fact that black people are different and that a difference is not a dificiency. I think the two have been confused because a man is different from another does not mean that he is deficient. For example, an apple and orange are both fruit but they are different. You don't compare an apple to an orange. You don't look for an apple to have an orangeness and vice versa. The same is true for black people. The Black experience is clearly a different one. So that the researchers must understand that an absent of whiteness in a black person is not a dificiency or weakness. You must look for some strength. We already know what the facts are and nothing is being done about it. I can't see anything really being significant coming out of the research.

> "First admission rates from the State Mental Health Hospitals during 1960-70 indicated that the black non-white children 50% of the admission rates were three times as high as the corresponding rate for white children. Sickle Cell Anemia

is basically a black disease. It occurs in about one out of every 100 black births. Until recently victims did not live beyond 40 and many dies in their twenties. Yet in 1968 the United States government gave $22,000 for research to combat sickle cell anemia but it gave $92,000 for lukemia, $65,000 for cystic fibrosis. In 1968 a private funding organization gave less than 50 thousand dollars for research on sickle cell anemia but over 7 million for research on muscular dystrophy, a disease striking mainly at whites and in a much lesser proportion, 1 in 400.